



All About Designing Toronto (#dezTO)

Designing Toronto: Planning, Unplanning and Community Development is a new course that aims to bridge the gaps between community development, design and the planning system in Toronto. Our goal is to assist community designers in advancing their city building projects by providing education on the planning system, learning how to engage with the community and discovering the strategies that can be used to take an urbanism project to the next level.

Context: Enhancing community-based development in Toronto requires that community change makers be knowledgeable of the City's planning system and what it takes to make change happen. Part of the core premise of this course is such – provide the educational tools and strategies necessary for community leaders to more effectively practice community-based development.

This course also revolves around the idea of eliciting community based action. A design-based thinking component will help community designers learn how to design out their ideas and better consult with their community. Graduates will have access to a Designing Toronto City Building Advisory Network to help continue moving their projects forward once the course is completed.

The main educational framework is that #dezTO will provide the background knowledge around the planning system, its history and legal frameworks. We then teach participants the tools necessary to access this system: design thinking, business modelling, community engagement, politics and organizing.

Learning Objectives: Course participants will learn and have a better understanding of:

- The history of urban planning and community development
- The urban planning system in Toronto
- How unplanning can work in Toronto
- Development financing and business planning
- Design-based thinking and engagement strategies to design out community-based ideas
- Building a great pitch for your urban idea

Who this course is for? This course is designed for community designers who are:

- Active in your community
- May or may not have an idea for community improvement
- Thinking about how to make Toronto better and design a better city
- An active problem solver
- A change maker or community animator

Pilot Curriculum: The Designing Toronto will initially run as a **4 week pilot course**. The reason for this format is so that we can test things out and learn as we further develop this program. The pilot curriculum breaks down as follows:

- **an intensive 2-day workshop:** the formal course curriculum, team formation & defining projects to work on;
- **4 weeks of studio time & office hours:** #dezTO projects can make use of lab space to meet weekly and/or connect with Designing Toronto team for guidance – the main idea is that groups will work on an initiative related to their project based on what was learned;
- **a Designing Toronto hosted event** at the end of the 4 weeks where #dezTO projects will be showcased to the public. This is also an opportunity to receive feedback;

- **1 week of studio time** to incorporate feedback into the projects;
- **a final class:** reflection on project development, plans for the future

Website and Network: In addition to the course, we plan to have a Designing Toronto City Building Advisory Network to continue to support projects once participants have left the course. All former participants will be a part of this network which will help create a City Builders community in Toronto to share best practices and collaborate on ideas.

Additionally, our website is planned to be a comprehensive repository of tools, case studies and blog posts on planning and unplanning related topics. The course curriculum is also planned to be uploaded as a wiki so community groups can contribute to it and help to make it a robust and comprehensive program.

Where We are At: We are actively working on developing the pilot course curriculum, the website and will be launching a crowd-funding campaign in 2014. If you would like to get involved, please email love@designingtonto.ca